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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yellowstone NATIONAL PARK

FILE No. 143

MONTHLY REPORT

March 1925

MARCH, 1925.

142
April 3, 1925.

Dear Sir:

The following is my report on conditions in the Yellowstone National Park and on the operation of the Park for the month of March, 1925:

I. GENERAL CONDITIONS

Weather

The following records are quoted from the report for March of the Observer in charge of the local United States Weather Bureau at Mammoth Hot Springs, Park Headquarters:

TEMPERATURE: Monthly mean, 29.8° , is 3.5° above normal. Mild weather prevailed throughout the month except for a few days at the beginning of the second decade, which were moderately cold. Highest temperature was 56° on the 27th; lowest -1 on the 10th. There were but two days with temperature zero or below.

PRECIPITATION: Total, 1.00 inch, is 1.18 inches below normal. The month was generally unsettled, and light precipitation, mostly snow, occurred on 22 days.

SNOWFALL: Total 11.5 inches; normal 16.9. The snow cover melted rapidly during the latter half of the month and had practically disappeared by the 29th except butts of drifts in a number of places. The average depth of snow on the ground at the end of March is 5.8 inches.

WIND: Average hourly velocity 10.1 miles; normal 8.8. The highest velocity was 42 miles per hour from the south on the 25th.

SUNSHINE: Percentage of possible 52; normal 57.

General Road Conditions

Road conditions between Mammoth and Gardiner, Mont., are good. Travel between Gardiner and Cooke City, Mont., has consisted of the regular schedules of the weekly mail sleighs, one return trip Buffalo Ranch to Mammoth and one return trip Mammoth to Buffalo Ranch with government sleighs. Snow is rapidly disappearing between Mammoth and Buffalo Ranch, and a limited amount of snow removal in "the gut" will enable cars to travel from Mammoth to Soda Butte Cabin by April 15. All other park roads will be closed to travel until some time in May. Snow depths at this time are considerable on all of the roads of the loop system.

Snow Depths

Snow depths throughout the park at the close of the month are as follows:

<u>Station</u>	<u>1924</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>1925</u> <u>Inches</u>
Lake	40	43
Snake River	52	58
Sylvan Pass	38	30
Riverside	38	38
Gallatin	35	39
Tower Falls	30	10
SloughCreek - Lower Ranch	30	12
Slough Creek- Upper Ranch	42	16
Buffalo Ranch	34	10
Canyon	--	42

Mail reports from the Bechler District covering the first half of the month give a maximum snow depth of 78 inches at the station. A maximum snow depth of 130 inches was reported from the South Riverside District on March 3rd. Rangers from Snake River Station reported a maximum snow depth of 130 inches with a water content of 47 inches near Lewis Lake on March 10th. On March 8th a maximum snow depth varying from 72 to 78 inches was noted on the Continental Divide between Basin and Thumb. Recent patrols in Sylvan Pass report snow depths varying from 7 feet at the 6 mile post to depths in excess of 20 feet at points between the 7 and 8 mile posts. Moderate temperatures have prevailed throughout the park during the month and snow depths have materially decreased at all points during the last two weeks.

Riverside Station reports the lowest temperature for the period. The report reads minus 8 on the 25th and minus 12 on the 26th.

Travel

No visitors were registered at any of the park entrances. However, travel between Gardiner and Mammoth Hot Springs is unrestricted and 102 visitors are known to have journeyed to headquarters during the month. The pre-season travel to March 1st was 595, which together with the visitors this month makes a pre-season total to date of 697.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARK

Personnel

On March 1 there were 62 employees on the payrolls, and on March 31 there were 63. The following list shows the number of appointees of various classes serving during the month, with a general statement of the kind of work in which they were engaged:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Kind of Work Performed</u>
1	Superintendent	General administration and supervision of all activities in the park.
2	Asst. Superintendents	1 in charge of administration, purchasing, disbursing; 1 in charge of property, equipment, transportation, cost accounts, inventories, etc., also acting as Assistant to Superintendent in capacity as Field Assistant to the Director.
2	Asst. Engineers	1 in charge of engineering work; 1 assisting. (Retd. from L.W.O.P.)
4	Clerks	1 Cost Accounting Clerk; 1 Personnel and File Clerk; 1 Clerk on orders, proposals and vouchers and timekeeping and payroll work; 1 stenographer-typist on Superintendent's correspondence and handling miscellaneous work on administrative side of office.
3	Electricians	Operated power plant regular shift, including Sundays, read meters, did necessary line work.
3	Foremen	1 in charge of headquarters corral and freighting work about headquarters; 2 on work in shops.

3	Telephone Switchboard Operators	2 temporary WAE operators, regular shifts; 1 permanent operator (on furlough).
1	Master Mechanic	In charge of shops and of repair to machinery.
2	Blacksmiths	General blacksmith work, including shoeing of horses in shop, repairing tools and equipment.
1	<i>Master</i> Master Plumber	In charge of general plumbing and water and sewer systems.
2	Auto Mechanics	1 on duty in power plant; 1 on repair work.
3	Laborers	Teaming, freighting, assisting mechanics and miscellaneous work at headquarters.
1	Steward & Master of Transportation	In charge of all transportation and of storehouses.
1	Chief Buffalo Keeper	In charge of Lamar Buffalo herd.
1	Asst. Buffalo Keeper	In charge of hay ranch operations at Slough Creek.
1	Buffalo Herder	Assisting buffalo keeper.
1	Park Naturalist	Scientific research work and developing museum.
1	Chief Park Ranger	In charge of ranger force.
1	1st Asst. Chief Park Ranger	In charge of Northern District.
2	Assts. Chief Park Ranger	1 on duty at Lake District; 1 in charge of Western Supervisory Territory.
22	Park Rangers (17 WAE)	Patrolling, protecting game and miscellaneous duties.
4	Park Rangers, temporary, (3 WAE)	Patrolling, protecting game and miscellaneous duties.

Leaves of Absence

August C. Neumann, Master Painter, March 21, 1 day.
 Andrew R. Edwin, Clerk, March 2(1/2); March 27(1/2), 1 day.

George Winn, Park Ranger, March 4-30, 23 days.
 James N. Dupuis, Park Ranger, March 10-15, 5 days.
 Charlie R. Stinnett, Blacksmith, March 6-7, 2 days.
 Bert L. Stinnett, Master Mechanic, March 6-7, 2 days.
 Roy T. Frazier, Park Ranger, March 5-16, 10 days; March 23-27, 5 days.
 Leroy Hill, Asst. Supt., March 10-11 (noon), 1-1/2 days.
 Leroy Hill, Asst. Supt., March 23-24 (noon), 1-1/2 days.
 Herschel Bowman, Park Ranger, March 2-12, 10 days.
 Joseph Joffe, Clerk, March 12 (noon) 1/2 day.
 Joseph Joffe, Clerk, March 13 (noon) 1/2 day.
 Joseph Joffe, Clerk, March 14, 1 day; March 30 1 day; total 2 days.
 Edward J. Bruce, Park Ranger, March 30-31, 2 days.
 Thad C. Pound, Park Ranger, March 23, 1 day.
 Forest L. Carter, Asst. Chief Park Ranger, March 9-13, 5 days.
 Samuel T. Woodring, Chief Ranger, March 20-21, 2 days.
 Anna E. Madsen, Clerk, March 12 (noon), 1/2 day; 19(n)-21(n); total 2-1/2.
 Harry J. Liek, Park Ranger, March 30-31, 2 days.
 Horace M. Albright, Superintendent, March 6-21, 14 days.
 Harry Trischman, 1st Asst. Ch. Park Ranger, March 26-31, 5 days.
 Edmund J. Sawyer, Park Naturalist, March 28, 1 day.
 Charles W. Enochs, Foreman, March 24-28, 5 days.
 Eri A. Allan, Electrician, March 16-21, 6 days.
 Warren Hutchings, Asst. Buffalo Keeper, March 19-31, 11 days.
 Arthur W. Burney, Asst. Engineer, March 5-7, 3 days.
 Joseph Nortman, Park Ranger, March 14-31, 15 days.
 Lee Cottrell, Park Ranger, March 7-31, 22 days.
 Michael E. Ferguson, Park Ranger, March 13-14, 2 days.

Sick Leave

Alfred C. D. Henman, Laborer, March 5-10, 6 days.
 Harry Trischman, 1st Asst. Ch. Park Ranger, March 2-25, 24 days.
 Walter Reimann, Park Ranger, March 19-31, 13 days.
 Eri A. Allan, Electrician, March 9-14, 6 days.
 Earl S. Bowman, Park Ranger, March 11-15, 4 days; Mar. 25-31, 7 days.

Leave Without Pay

Charles Green, Laborer, March 23-31.
 Nellie Roach, Telephone Operator, Mar. 1-31.
 Daniel W. Tripp, Laborer, Mar. 1-31.

Resignations

Daniel W. Tripp, Laborer, \$1440 p.a., qrs., effective close March 31.
 William H. Bayliff, park ranger, \$1200, p.a., qrs., WAE, effective Mar. 31.
 Frank Thone, " " \$140 mo. qrs., WAE, effective Mar. 31.
 John T. Moose " " \$1200 p.a., qrs., WAE, effective Mar. 31.
 Alexander D. Hollenbeck, " " \$1200 p.a., qrs., WAE, effective Mar. 31.

Resignations (Continued)

Margaret Thone, Park Ranger,	\$1200 p.a.,	qrs.,	WAE,	effective Mar.	31.
Gordon Cottier, Park Ranger,	\$1440 "	"	"	"	31.
Jake S. Alexander, " "	\$1200 "	"	"	"	31.
Austin B. Wood, " "	\$1200 "	"	"	"	31.

Returned from furlough

William I. Davis, Asst. Engineer, \$250 per m. & qrs., WAE, March 15, 1925.

Office Force Activities

During the month of March 1251 pieces of official mail were received and 1343 were sent out.

Finances

Costs of Operation, etc.: The cost of operating the park for the month of March, 1925, will be shown on the Monthly Cost Accounting Report which will go forward as soon as prepared.

Revenues:

Sale of Electricity:

Certified Check #522, dated March 16, 1925, drawn by George Whittaker on The National Park Bank, Livingston, Montana, to the Director, National Park Service, amount.....	\$ 2.40
Certified Check #884, dated March 7, 1925, drawn by Vernon Goodwin on The National Bank of Montana, Helena, Montana, to The Director, National Park Service, amount.....	4.15
Certified Check #919, dated March 17, 1925, drawn by Yellowstone Park Transportation Company on the National Bank of Montana, Helena, Montana, to The Director, National Park Service, amount.....	146.53
Certified Check #1141, dated March 17, 1925, drawn by H. W. Child on the National Bank of Montana, Helena, Montana, to the Director, National Park Service, amount.....	11.43

Plans, Maps and Surveys

The work of the Engineering Department has consisted principally of general office work and preparation for the coming season. Two assistant engineers were on duty the latter part of the month, one having returned March 15th from leave without pay.

Report on Commissary & Transportation

The Commissary employees were engaged in a general cleanup of the Commissary, and the shelves started last month were completed. The necessary freighting between Gardiner and Mammoth was accomplished by the transportation department.

III. MAINTENANCE OF IMPROVEMENTS AND FACILITIES.

Grounds

Necessary work, such as hauling coal, wood, ice and garbage was done in this department.

Electrical and Telephone Systems

The Electrician completed the wiring of the hospital and did some work in the Canteen building. He relieved an operator at the Power Plant half of the month, who was on sick leave. The interior of the Power Plant was kalsomined and the floors painted by plant operators.

The Power Plant was operated in the usual manner. It was run constantly with the results shown in comparison with those of March, 1924, as follows:

	<u>1924</u>	<u>1925</u>
Total current generated in KW hours	44,840	49,550
Of this, sold to public operators at 5¢ per KWH	4,002	2,834.3
Consumed for street lighting	1,706	1,925.
Balance, consumed in government buildings, for power and lighting, and lost on lines in transit	39,132	44,770.7
Peak load during month in KWH	92	100

The Telephone and Switchboard office was open daily from 7:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. The total business handled was as follows:

	<u>1924</u>	<u>1925</u>
On Government local lines.....	2319	3433
On Hotel Company lines.....	293	404
On Long Distance connections.....	131	172
	<u>2743</u>	<u>4009</u>

Water and Sewer Systems

Plumbing and heating work was completed in the hospital. Other work consisted of general maintenance to the water, sewer and heating systems about headquarters.

Machinery and Equipment

The Master Mechanic and his helpers overhauled during the month six trucks and two cars. One Caterpillar was completely overhauled and a good bit of lathe work and woodwork done on trucks. The Blacksmith overhauled a concrete mixer and eleven sprinkler wagons. Besides, he shod horses and did repairing to light equipment. Two foremen, working in the shops during the winter months, made during the month twenty-six double toilets for automobile camps and two hundred camp tables. The old bakeshop was raised and blocked, preparatory to making living quarters of it.

The Master Painter did some painting in the hospital but most of his time during the month was devoted to the painting of equipment, with the assistance of one helper.

V. PROTECTION DEPARTMENT.

The more noteworthy of the regular patrols this month are noted as follows: Riverside to South Riverside and return on the 2nd and 3rd, Riverside to Upper Geyser Basin on the 5th to 10th inclusive, Lake Station to Upper Yellowstone and return on the 19th to 28th inclusive, Soda Butte station to Cold Creek and return on the 20th to 28th inclusive.

Chief Ranger Woodring made the following special patrols during the month:- Mammoth to Cottonwood Basin and return on the 6th and 7th to make a survey of elk and forage conditions in the district, Mammoth to Crevice Basin and return on the 12th and 13th to intercept the drift of a band of approximately 100 buffalo that were moving down the Yellowstone. Special patrol of the antelope range on the 23rd resulting in a total count of 417, the largest in recent years, and on the 24th to 26th inclusive a special patrol was made to the Cottonwood-Hellroaring district for the primary purpose of investigating fresh lion signs in the district.

The hunt was not successful but a thorough patrol of the district was had. Assistant Chief Ranger Douglas made a patrol, Lake to Mammoth via Pelican Creek, Cold Creek and Lamar River. This patrol was for the purpose of making special observations of wild animal conditions in the district, particularly the scattered bands of buffalo on the Upper Lamar River and on Pelican Creek. The following ranger patrols of the telephone lines were had during the month: Gallatin Station to Mammoth on the 1st and 2nd, Mammoth to Lake on the 23rd to 25th inclusive, Lake to Thumb on the 28th to 31st inclusive, and Lake to Mammoth on the 31st to April 2nd inclusive.

Other activities have consisted of horse feeding at Yancey's 1st to 9th inclusive and at Gardiner since the 10th; buffalo feeding throughout the month at the buffalo ranch and elk feeding at Buffalo Ranch, Upper and Lower Slough Creek Ranches, Yancey's, Gardiner and Mammoth.

One two-year old bull elk was captured, crated and shipped by express to Mr. W. W. Johnson of Mexico, Missouri, on the 18th. Considerable work has been done at headquarters on saddle horse and pack equipment.

Other work of the members of this department have consisted of the regular patrols in the various districts and routine duties.

Wild Animals

Forage Conditions: Forage conditions during the first half of the month were bad and elk feeding was in progress at all points where hay was available; moderate temperatures and warm winds occurred at intervals between the 14th and 21st and considerable areas of good forage were uncovered. Since then forage conditions have improved from day to day and conditions at the close of the month are good. Large areas of good forage have been uncovered within the past 10 days.

Elk: The feed grounds have been abandoned at all points, except for a small band of about 35 at Lower Slough Creek and the small band of about 3 dozen that have been feeding near the stables at Mammoth since early in January. Newly uncovered areas along the east side of the Yellowstone are covered with elk and large numbers have moved into the Blacktail country. More than 1000 have been recently observed between Hellroaring and Slough Creek moving up.

Reports on the Gallatin herd do not indicate any drift of consequence to date. The herds are generally looking fair, but considerable losses will occur during the next few weeks, particularly among the calves. The reported losses for the month are as follows: Gallatin District, 22 calves.

5 bulls and 6 cows, total 33; Mammoth-Gardiner District, 24 calves, 8 bulls, 14 cows, total 46; Crevise District 10 calves, 2 bulls, 2 cows, total 14; Buffalo Ranch 12 calves, 2 bulls, 8 cows, total 22; Hellroaring District 10 calves, 3 bulls, 6 cows, total 19; Slough Creek 4 calves, 3 bulls, 3 cows, total 10. Other points 1 calf, 1 bull, 4 cows, total 6. The entire losses for the month are as follows: calves 83, cows 43, bulls 24, total 150, all of which are winter kills. The total of the losses previously reported is 1412; the total of the reported losses to date is 1562; this figure covers the losses from all causes since the opening of the hunting season last fall. 52 elk are known to have wintered in the Upper Yellowstone District and 51 are known to have wintered along the headwaters of the Lamar River. The bands that wintered on the Firehole River totaled 151. Not less than 400 are considered to have wintered in the warm basins and on the higher elevations of the park. The feed grounds at the Buffalo Ranch were abandoned on the 21st. They quit at Gardiner on the 22nd; feeding at Yancey's was concluded on the 24th and at Upper Slough Creek on the 28th.

Deer: The deer have wintered splendidly. Recent counts submitted by rangers on patrol are as follows: Bear Creek to Hellroaring 127, foothills of Sepulchre Mountain between Gardiner and Hoppe's Ranch 90, immediate vicinity of Mammoth 50, Madison Junction to Upper Geyser Basin 55; Slough Creek to Hellroaring 19, Soda Butte 18, Gallatin 4, total 363. The losses for the month are as follows: Mammoth 1, Hellroaring 2, total 3. They were winter kills. The previously reported losses are 84, which, together with the losses this month, total 87. This figure covers the losses from all causes since the opening of the hunting season last fall. The bucks began dropping their horns about February 20th.

Antelope: The antelope range has been patrolled daily throughout the winter season and special patrols have been frequently made. Several very careful counts have been submitted during the season, and they have not greatly varied. The most recent of these counts was submitted by the Chief Ranger and the Park Naturalist at the conclusion of their special antelope patrol of the 23rd. They actually counted 214 on the antelope range outside the park between Gardiner, Montana, and Walter Hoppe's Ranch. 203 were counted within the park on the foothills of Sepulchre and Mt. Evarts, making a total of 417. This is our largest antelope count of recent years. The herd is in exceptionally good condition. The bands that have been wintering outside the park moved up en masse on the 28th and broke up into small bands on the foothills of Mt. Evarts. A few have since moved back but the tendency is to move out toward their summer range. The season's losses to date total 4. Two were killed by coyotes and two were winter kills.

Sheep: No sheep counts of consequence were submitted during the month as rangers in the districts most frequented by sheep were chiefly employed with elk feeding. However, a few isolated counts were submitted and are noted as follows: Bison Peak 7, Mts. Norris and Thunderer 22,

Abiathar Peak 3, Tower Falls District 54, Mammoth-Gardiner District 21, total 107. No sheep losses have been reported within the park this season. However, reported losses of six have been submitted from points adjacent to the park, 5 were killed by hunters in the Sylvan Pass District of Wyoming and one was killed by a hunter at a point near Gardiner, Mont. The last named killing was unlawful and one Henry Rockinger was arrested, convicted and fined for the offense.

Moose: No full count on moose was attempted this month, except in the south and west districts. Reports from the north district were negligible because of the fact that the rangers of this district were otherwise employed. The following counts were had and submitted: Indian Tepees - Tower Falls Road - 2, Gallatin District 9, Riverside District 7, Bechler District 22, Snake River District 7, Upper Yellowstone District 54, Bear Creek - south district - 2, Sylvan Pass district 16, total 119. There are no reported losses this season to date and the condition of all observed is good.

Buffalo:- Lamar River Herd: The herd has been exceedingly restless since early in the month and on the 10th (in the night time) a band of 91 abandoned the feed grounds and proceeded down the Yellowstone toward Gardiner. They were met by the Chief Ranger on the 12th at a point a few miles above Gardiner and turned back; they were promptly turned over to the Chief Buffalo Keeper who returned them to the ranch. Feeding was concluded on the west side of the Lamar River on the 24th and the herd transferred to the home ranch where feeding was resumed. The calves were released and joined the main herd on the 28th, making a total of 409 on the feed ground at the time. Three abortions occurred during the month. A loss of one is reported during the month and consisted of an old cow, - a winter kill - on Miller Creek. The last previous reported herd total is 670, the herd total at this time is 669. Buffalo feeding will be concluded on or before April 10th.

Latest counts on the buffalo frequenting the headwaters of the Lamar River and Pelican Creek indicate a total of 33 on the pelican flats; very little has been seen of the bands on the Upper Lamar this month, so the total submitted last month is unchanged. We, therefore, have the rather interesting co-incidence of 33 members to each of these isolated groups of buffalo, the total being 66.

Bear: The non-hibernating mother and cub at Lake Station has been noted in the preceding monthly reports. Except for these the first bear signs of the season were observed by Ranger Cottrell near Heart Lake on February 13th. The second report of bear signs was made by Ranger Ogston on March 5th. These signs were observed at Mud Geyser and at a point 3 miles north of Norris Station on the rock slide near Bear Creek and on Pebble Creek. Two bears have recently appeared at Canyon, the first appeared on the 21st and the second on the 28th. Two have also been recently seen at Mammoth.

Small animals: New beaver workings have been recently observed near the mouth of Slough Creek and also at Beaver Lake.

Signs of marten, mink and skunk have been reported at intervals during the month. A colony of marten consisting of 10 or 12 have made daily visits to the caretaker's quarters at Canyon Camp throughout the winter. Their calls appear to have been calculated to occur at meal-times and they ate freely of whatever was given them. If anything was left on the table they helped themselves.

Woodchucks and ground squirrels are commonly seen in the Mammoth-Gardiner District. They were first observed early in the month.

Predatory Animals

Lynx signs have been recently observed at Lewis Lake and on Cache Creek. Numerous coyote signs were observed on the recent Upper Yellowstone Patrol. They appeared to be running in packs of from 4 to 5; the condition of the snow in this district is such that they could cover extensive areas with ease. Numerous signs have also been observed during the month in the neighborhood of the Buffalo Ranch. A total of 6 were killed during the month, which, together with 163 previously reported, makes a total at this time of 169, as compared with a total of 209 on March 31st, 1924.

Water Fowl

Ducks and geese have been plentiful on the Madison and Yellowstone Rivers throughout the month and geese have recently appeared on Slough Creek. Six swan were also observed on Campanula Creek late in the month.

Summer Birds

Summer birds have been commonly seen in the Mammoth District during the month, particularly blue birds. Blue birds have also been recently seen at Riverside and Canyon.

Ranch Operations

Slough Creek - Upper Ranch: Elk feeding was in progress here from the 1st to 28th inclusive. The numbers varied from 130 to 400. The feed grounds were practically abandoned by the 28th and feeding was concluded. 38 tons of hay were fed, leaving a balance of 2 tons on hand.

Slough Creek - Lower Ranch: Elk feeding has been in progress at Lower Slough Creek throughout the month. They have varied in number from about 500 to a small band of 36 at the end of the month. 36 tons of hay were fed; there is a balance of 4 tons on hand.

Buffalo Ranch: Buffalo feeding has been in progress throughout the month. Elk feeding was concluded on the 21st when the herd abandoned the feed grounds. Buffalo and elk feeding at this point during the month

accounted for 119-1/2 tons of hay. 6 tons were fed to the horses, making a total of 125-1/2 tons, leaving a balance of 49 tons on hand.

Yancey Hay Ranch: Park Service and Ranger horses were fed at this point the 1st to 9th (they were removed on the latter date to Gardiner) and elk feeding was in progress here from the 1st to 24th. The band at this point varied from 125 to 210. The feed ground was practically abandoned on the 24th; a total of 10 tons of hay were fed, leaving a balance of 2-1/2 tons on hand at this time.

Gardiner Hay Ranch: The Park Service and Ranger horses have been fed at this point since the 9th. Elk feeding has been in progress from the 1st to 22nd. The largest number on the feed ground at any one time was about 600. The feed ground was practically abandoned when elk feeding was discontinued on the 22nd. All hay fed on the elk and deer feed grounds at Mammoth was hauled from the stack yard at Gardiner, and considerable tonnage was required for this purpose as feeding in greater or less degree has been in progress at Mammoth throughout the month. The elk on the feed grounds at this point were for a time in excess of 400. The deer vary from 2 to 3 dozen. There were about 3 dozen elk on the feed ground at Mammoth at the end of the month.

The hay used from the Gardiner stack yard for all purposes amounted to 176 tons, leaving a balance of 52 tons on hand at this time. This balance consists of 35 tons from last year's cutting and 17 tons of old hay.

Special Incidents

On the afternoon of March 30, 1925, a fire started in the blacksmith shop of the Transportation Company, and spread so rapidly that within an hour's time several buildings, belonging to the Transportation Company, and 93 cars were destroyed. The following is the report of the Board appointed to make inquiry regarding the cause of the fire:

In accordance with telegraphic instructions from Superintendent Horace M. Albright, dated at Corona, California, March 31, 1925, the following men were appointed as a board, by Acting Superintendent Hill on April 1, 1925, to make inquiry regarding the cause of fire which occurred at Mammoth Hot Springs on the afternoon of March 30, 1925:

Peter E. Bilkert, Assistant Superintendent, Chairman
Arthur W. Burney, Assistant Engineer
Julius L. Greer, Park Ranger.

On the afternoon of April 1st, at 4:15 P.M., Mr. Bilkert and Mr. Greer (Mr. Burney being absent) met in the room of the Transportation Company storage garage, occupied by P. Myers, and examined witnesses as to the cause of the fire. The following men, who were in or near the blacksmith

shop, where the fire started, were questioned as to its cause:

Carl Beaver, Electrician, Yellowstone Park Transportation Company.
Bert Ammerman, Mechanics Helper, Yellowstone Park Transportation Co.
Joe Preznick, Mechanics Helper, Yellowstone Park Transportation Co.

Mr. Beaver stated that he had just finished working on a spring on the anvil in the blacksmith shop and was returning to the electrical shop, which is in the room next to the blacksmith shop, when he heard a blowing sound and looking around saw oil coming from something under the oil burner used for tempering springs. He said he couldn't tell whether the hose connection had broken, had pulled out or had come loose, but it was dangling from side to side spouting oil. The oil burner was red hot and running at the time and there was also a fire in the forge located a few feet from the oil burner. The oil spouting from under the oil burner soon ignited and within a few seconds had shot up to the ceiling and was spreading along the roof. This blacksmith shop was in the extreme northwest corner of the main garage building. The fire was so hot and spread so rapidly that it was impossible to get near it to shut off the oil or the burner.

Mr. Bert Ammerman, who had just come through the blacksmith shop and was in the door leading out into the machine shop, was standing close by Mr. Beaver when the fire broke out. He had little to add to what Mr. Beaver stated for it seems that everything happened so quickly that the men didn't know what it was. He said when he saw the oil spouting he immediately ran and got a pyrene and when he got back everything was in a blaze and there was no chance of stopping it. He stated that all of the fire extinguishers worked but the fire had spread so quickly that there was no way of stopping it.

Mr. Joe Preznick stated that he was just outside the blacksmith shop near the driveway when he heard someone holler "Fire." He immediately grabbed a pyrene and ran toward the blacksmith shop. He reached the blacksmith shop in time to see the hose dangling and spouting oil and he corroborated what both Mr. Beaver and Mr. Ammerman had said. He couldn't tell what had caused the fire but he saw the hose dangling from side to side shooting oil and the fire had spread so fast that there was no chance of stopping it.

It developed during the meeting that the alarm was turned in by Mr. F. R. Seline, employed in the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company's office. He was out in the aisle near the office getting a bucket of coal when he saw the fire. He immediately ran around to the fire box and turned in the alarm. He then started back to the fire but he realized that after he would get back there he couldn't do anything as the fire was spreading rapidly. He then ran back to the office, which is at the extreme southwest corner of the building, but the fire had spread so rapidly and the smoke was so thick that he couldn't get in there.

Mr. L. E. Johnson, an employee of the Transportation Company, was also questioned and he stated that he was in the stockroom at the time the fire broke out. He said he immediately grabbed an armload of pyrenes and started back toward the fire but the smoke was so thick that he saw he couldn't make any headway so he had to go out a window in order to escape. He said that the fire had gone immediately to the roof and was spreading from one end to the other and that the smoke was so thick that he couldn't see any distance ahead of him. He also stated that everything was done that possibly could have been done but it was impossible to save the building and contents once the fire started spreading.

Mr. Johnson Lockwood, Assistant Superintendent of the Transportation Company, stated that within the first half hour of the fire about 75 cars were moved out and saved and the work of saving cars continued. The consensus of opinion of all those present seemed to be that everything that was possible to do was done and that every man did his share. All efforts were concentrated on saving cars and stopping the spread of the fire to other buildings and this work was exceedingly well accomplished.

The fire started between 2:15 and 2:20 P.M. and was under control by about 3:30 P.M., but all the buildings that were destroyed were burned to the ground by that time.

The buildings that were destroyed consisted of the main garage building, comprising the machine shop and blacksmith shop, the building housing the top shop, carpenter shop, and paint shop, the oil house, the new storage shed, and the residence of F. E. Kammermeyer.

The cars that were destroyed consisted of the following:

TRANSPORTATION COMPANY'S CARS

22	-	7-passenger Whites
53	-	10-passenger White buses
5	-	2-ton white trucks
1	-	5-ton white truck
4	-	Ford roadsters
1	-	Ambulance
2	-	D55 Buicks
<u>88</u>	-	Total

CAMPS COMPANY'S CARS

2	-	2-ton white trucks
1	-	7-passenger Buick
1	-	3/4 ton white truck
<u>4</u>		

1	-	Ford coupe (belonging to an employee of the Transportation Company).
<u>93</u>		TOTAL CARS DESTROYED

P. E. Bilkert
Chairman of Board

Other Items of Interest

The snow plow arrived at West Yellowstone on the 7th and weekly (Saturday) schedule became effective on the 28th.

VI. MUSEUM, NATURE GUIDE WORK, EDUCATIONAL WORK.

The Park Naturalist returned to the Park on March 14th, after an absence in California on business for the National Park Service.

The winter caretaker at Camp Roosevelt has, on request of the Park Naturalist, caught two Rocky Mountain jays which are now being kept at Mammoth for the Zoo. Plans for a proposed flying cage were handed to Assistant Engineer Burney, and all details possible to anticipate were discussed. Mr. Burney is working on the more detailed plans. In the meantime prices of materials not to be had from present stock have been requested, also samples of wire netting.

Work has been begun on checking up applications for most likely nature guides for the tourist season.

Plans for printing "Nature Notes from Yellowstone Park" are under way, that the series may conform more nearly to "Yosemite Nature Notes" and meet the demands owing to a growing mailing list.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS.

Religious Services

Church services were held in the Canteen on March 1 (evening), March 15 (morning) and March 29 (evening) by the Rev. W. Friend Day of Emigrant, Mont., of the Episcopal Church.

Rev. Geo. C. Koehler of the English Lutheran Church of Livingston, Mont., held services on Thursday evening March 5th, and on Thursday evening, March 19th.

Permits

Mr. T. G. Randolph of International News Reel Corporation, Seattle, Washington, was granted permission, dated March 30, 1925, to take motion pictures in Yellowstone National Park.

Cordially yours,

The Director,
National Park Service,
Dept. of the Interior,
Washington, D.C.

LEROY HILL
Acting Superintendent.